

Today's News - Friday, March 11, 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Japan - and elsewhere - dealing with today's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

- Hume cheers Safdie's return to Toronto with a waterfront project - and the architect's grilling by the Toronto Waterfront Design Review Panel: "a welcome reminder that Torontonians are still engaged in their future."
- Hatherley cautions cheering too soon for U.K.'s housing minister's call for architectural localism as an "answer to identikit housing": demanding "the new look as much like the old as possible" could be "as sweepingly 'totalitarian' as any Le Corbusier could want to be."
- Saffron on the sad state - and potentially sadder fate - of hundreds of historic Philadelphia churches: the "battle for the soul of the city's religious buildings promises to be a long and difficult one. There will certainly be casualties."
- It's history vs. height as a battle brews between developers and preservationists over the future of Seattle's Pioneer Square.
- Presentation of Holl's controversial Glasgow School of Art proposal before the Glasgow City Council is delayed (some tweaking in store, perhaps?).
- A long conversation with almost all of the 2011 Architectural League Emerging Voices uncovers miles of distance (along with years) between these firms and the New York 5: "you only need to look at their names" - and attitudes: "young architects want to be a bit like rock bands, too."
- An eyeful of London's Bankside BikeShed competition finalists (definitely worth a look!).
- Weekend diversions:
- In viewing the Brit Insurance Design Awards finalists, "one realizes just how widely design infiltrates contemporary life" (and solutions are trumping aesthetics).
- The architect/curator of "The Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham" exhibition in Tucson explains how collaborations between choreographers and architects constitute nothing less than "a real if not always recognized architectural 'type'."
- Dunlop cheers "The Architecture of Drawing" on view in Miami: it "shows us - quite definitively - what we are missing in a culture, a time, a world that has abandoned the sketchbook."
- In Melbourne, the world is turned upside down in "Leak" by Rosemary Laing, who built, then photographed an upside-down house in a "countryside that is doomed to become suburban sprawl", creating "a powerful symbol of environmental abuse."
- Rybczynski has a few quibbles with Glaeser's "Triumph of the City": dying cities "don't need light rail, downtown stadiums, or flashy new museums. They need smart people."
- Moore takes issue with "Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next" that doesn't answer the really interesting question: why is the true aerotropolis taking so long to get off the ground (the book also tries "too hard to be a smarty-pants bestseller").
- Gruber says if you "can get beyond the emphasis on New Urbanist projects," you'll find Thadani's "The Language of Towns and Cities: A Visual Dictionary" is "a pleasure to read" and a valuable resource written by a New Urbanist who does not "categorically condemn Modernism."
- Poyner finds "Edgelands" a "startlingly fresh and perceptive read" about "transitional zones" that "can be found anywhere that urban development meets open land."
- Calys cheers "Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco" for being "copiously illustrated and painstakingly researched...a large 'coffee table' format, it is anything but another glossy book."
- A great slide show essay of "The London Bus Story" by John Christopher.
- Pentagram's new Designers & Books website clues us into what's sitting on notable designers' nightstands.

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[City-bashers control City Hall, but city-builders rule waterfront: Debate over waterfront project a welcome reminder that Torontonians are still engaged in their future.](#) The architect who nearly 25 years ago designed the best ballet/opera house this city never had has finally landed his first Toronto project...found himself having to answer some very pointed questions...queries were a welcome sign that waterfront revitalization is well underway. By Christopher Hume -- Moshe Safdie- Toronto Star

[Architectural localism is no answer to identikit housing: Some may identify with Grant Shapps's pledge to end 'identikit' housing design, but it could usher in a new totalitarianism...what is his alternative? Merely making the new look as much like the old as possible, a demand as sweepingly 'totalitarian' as any Le Corbusier could want to be.](#) By Owen Hatherley- Guardian (UK)

[Philadelphia's historic churches: Do they have a prayer for survival? The Church of the Assumption gets its final shot at redemption...As hopeless causes go, the Assumption's chances look better than most...The battle for the soul of the city's religious buildings promises to be a long and difficult one. There will certainly be casualties. But the first salvo will be fired Monday...](#) By Inga Saffron -- Patrick Charles Keely (1848); Partners for Sacred Places; Preservation Alliance [slide show]- Philadelphia Inquirer

[Pioneer Square: Historic character vs. height: Developers and preservationists are facing off over how to revitalize Seattle's oldest neighborhood without destroying its historic character...."You can preserve historic buildings, but what does it matter if there are no businesses and nobody lives here? The city needs to give developers some incentive to build."](#) - Seattle Times

[Decision on Steven Holl's £50 million Glasgow School of Art delayed: ...revised date for consideration of the proposal is pencilled in for the 22 March...](#) -- Charles Rennie Mackintosh; JM Architects- The Architects' Journal (UK)

[Is the next generation of architects really ready to build?: On the first night of lectures by...the 2011 Architectural League Emerging Voices...nobody was really talking about building new buildings...there is the chance to revise the profession...For a sense of what's different about the Emerging Voices firms, compared to the New York 5, you only need to look at their names..."young architects want to be a bit like rock bands, too."](#) -- Interboro; Lateral Office; Taylor and Miller; Ball-Nogues Studio; de leon & primmer architecture workshop; Ruy Klein; WXY architecture + urban design (Weisz + Yoes)- Capital New York

[Bankside BikeShed competition finalists revealed: ...five shortlisted schemes in the Architecture Foundation competition to design a £10,000 prototype bike shed for use in the Bankside area of Southwark, south London -- Atmos Studio; Dream Studio; Studio Meda; Quinn Architecture; Tughela Gino Architecture \[images\]-](#) The Architects' Journal (UK)

[Function to the forefront: Just by looking at the seven categories...in The Brit Insurance Design Awards...one realises just how widely design infiltrates contemporary life. Innovation, functionality, beauty and, increasingly importantly, sustainability: just some of the many factors that contribute to truly great design, be it a car or a lampshade.](#) - Nouse (University of York, UK)

["The Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham": Architect Beth Weinstein explores...collaborations between choreographers...and architects, including Frank Gehry, Tod Williams Billie Tsien, Dominique Perrault and Benedetta Tagliabue \(exhibition at the University of Arizona in Tucson on view until March 22\) \[images, links\]-](#) Places Journal

[A new exhibition honors architecture's sketchbook traditions: "The Architecture of Drawing" at ArtCenter / South Florida \[through April 3\] shows us — quite definitively — what we are missing in a culture, a time, a world that has abandoned the sketchbook...it is both homage and exploration.](#) By Beth Dunlop -- Jake Brillhart; Errol Barron [slide show]- Miami Herald

[World turned upside down: "Leak" by Rosemary Laing...The upside-down house was constructed on the hill, and the artist had to organise a fair bit of carpentry, plus the co-operation of a farmer...When she transposes her house...to sit in the countryside that is doomed to become suburban sprawl, she creates a powerful symbol of environmental abuse \(Tolarno](#)

Galleries, Melbourne, to March 19) [image]- Sydney Morning Herald

How To Save Dying Cities: They don't need light rail, downtown stadiums, or flashy new museums. They need smart people..."Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier" by Edward Glaeser...is critical of thriving cities that impose arcane building regulations, complex zoning, and restrictive conservation rules to limit new construction... By Witold Rybczynski- Slate

"Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next" by Greg Lindsay and John Kasarda : Will the urban centres of tomorrow be built around large, busy airports? Rowan Moore does not think so...The really interesting question is why the true aerotropolis...is taking so long to get off the ground...straining too hard to be a smartypants bestseller...to explore this complexity. It is hectoring, breathless, over-persuading, a boring book with an interesting one struggling to get out.- Observer (UK)

Talking Urban: "The Language of Towns and Cities: A Visual Dictionary" by Dhiru A. Thadani...If one can get beyond the emphasis on...New Urbanist projects...one will find...a valuable resource. It is certainly a pleasure to read...[he] is also not a New Urbanist who categorically condemns Modernism. By Frank Gruber -- Le Corbusier; Léon Krier; Andrés Duany- Huffington Post

The Secret History of the Edgelands: Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts' book, a startlingly fresh and perceptive read, is subtitled Journeys into England's True Wilderness, but the phenomenon it describes is not specific to England. These transitional zones can be found anywhere that urban development meets open land. By Rick Poyner [images]- Design Observer

Port City: they that go down to the sea in ships: "Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco 1848-2010" by Michael Corbett...copiously illustrated [and] painstakingly researched...a large "coffee table" format, it is anything but another glossy book. By George Calys [slide show]- San Francisco Examiner

"The London Bus Story" by John Christopher recounts the history of one of London's most famous icons. [slide show essay]- Telegraph (UK)

50 Famous Designers Share the Books That Inspire Them: Ever wondered what George Lois, Daniel Libeskind, and Margaret McCurry have on their nightstands? Wonder no more, thanks to Pentagram's new website...Designers & Books-Fast Company



Ryue Nishizawa: Teshima Art Museum, Teshima Island, Seto Inland Sea, Japan

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